CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A riser for supporting a plurality of panels having perimeter edges to be laminated with a plastic laminate sheet, comprising:

a platform defined for a press table of a laminating press by a plurality of alternating ridges and recesses;

a plurality of blocks having opposing distal ends received in the recesses for selective longitudinal movement therein, each of the blocks extending from the recess sufficiently to define a gap between a distal surface of the block and an upper surface of the adjacent ridges,

whereby the blocks, being moved longitudinally in the recesses define wrap gaps between the ends of the blocks and the edges of the panels supported thereon for the plastic laminate sheet to wrap under perimeter edges of the panels during lamination in the laminating press.

2. The riser as recited in claim 1, wherein the platform defines a plurality of pathways through the platform for communicating air into and from the gaps during the laminating process.

3. The riser as recited in claim 2, wherein the pathways are defined in spaced-apart relation in the ridges.

4. The riser as recited in claim 3, wherein the pathways in a ridge are interconnected on a bottom surface by a groove.

5. The riser as recited in claim 1, wherein the platform comprises a body in which the plurality of recesses are formed to define the alternating ridges and recesses.

6. The riser as recited in claim 5, wherein the body defines a plurality of pathways for communicating air into and from the gaps during the laminating process.

7. The riser as recited in claim 6, wherein the pathways in a ridge are interconnected on a bottom surface by a groove.

8. The riser as recited in claim 5, further comprising a plenum for commonly connecting at least two of the pathways.

9. The riser as recited in claim 1, wherein each ridge comprises an elongate member attached to the press table in spaced-apart relation to an adjacent one of the elongate members, thereby defining the alternating ridges and recesses.

10. The riser as recited in claim 9, wherein each elongate member defines a plurality of spaced-apart pathways for communicating air into and from the gaps during the laminating process.

11. The riser as recited in claim 10, wherein the pathways in a ridge are interconnected on a bottom surface by a groove.

12. A method of supporting a plurality of panels having perimeter edges to be laminated with a plastic laminate sheet, comprising the steps of:

(a) placing a plurality of blocks having opposing distal ends in recesses of a platform defined by a plurality of alternating ridges and recesses for a press table of a laminating press, each of the blocks extending from the recess sufficiently to define a gap between a

distal surface of the block and an upper surface of the adjacent ridges;

(b) placing panels to be laminated in spaced-apart relation on the blocks;

(c) moving the blocks covered by the panels longitudinally in the recesses to dispose the end of the block inwardly of one of the perimeter edges of the panel to define a wrap gap,

whereby the wrap gaps between the blocks and the panels supported thereon provide space for the plastic laminate sheet to wrap under perimeter edges of the panels during lamination in the laminating press.

13. The method of supporting as recited in claim 12, further comprising the step of removing at least one of the plurality of blocks from the recess for panels which have an edge that does not provide sufficient room for the wrap gap.

14. The method of supporting as recited in claim 12, further comprising the step of communicating air from the gaps through pathways defined in the platform.

15. The method of supporting as recited in claim 14, further comprising the step of communicating air for at least two of the pathways in a common plenum.

16. A method of modifying a press table of a laminating press to provide a riser for supporting a plurality of panels having perimeter edges to be laminated with a plastic laminate sheet, comprising the steps of:

(a) defining a plurality of alternating ridges and recesses for a press table of a laminating press with each ridge having an upper surface; and

(b) providing a plurality of blocks having opposing distal ends for being disposed in the recesses selectively for supporting panels thereon, each of the blocks extending from the recess sufficiently to define a gap between a distal surface of the block and an upper surface of the adjacent ridges,

whereby wrap gaps for portions of a plastic laminate sheet to wrap under perimeter edges of the panels during lamination in the laminating press are defined by moving the blocks longitudinally in the recesses to dispose the end of the block inwardly of one of the perimeter edges of the panel being at least partially supported by the block.

17. The method of modifying a press table as recited in claim 16, wherein step (a) comprises attaching a plurality of elongate members in spaced-apart relation to the press table of the membrane press.

18. The method of modifying a press table as recited in claim 16, wherein step (a) comprises placing on the press table a body in which the plurality of recesses are cut to define the alternating ridges and recesses.

19. The method of modifying a press table as recited in claim 16, further comprising the step of providing a plenum for common communication of air through the riser.

20. A laminating press for laminating plastic sheet to panels, comprising:

a press table having a perimeter seal edge;

a cover housing that is selectively engageable with the press table to define a sealed cavity;

a riser defined by a plurality of alternating ridges and recesses for supporting on the press table a plurality of panels to be laminated;

a plurality of blocks having opposing distal ends received in the recesses for selective longitudinal

movement therein, each of the blocks extending from the recess sufficiently to define a gap between a distal surface of the block and an upper surface of the adjacent ridges; and

a vacuum source for selectively evacuating air from the sealed cavity,

whereby panels to be laminated by a plastic sheet disposed thereon are supported on the blocks that are moved longitudinally in the recesses to define wraps gaps between the ends of the blocks and the perimeter edges of the panels supported thereon to provide space for the plastic laminate sheet to wrap under perimeter edges of the panels during lamination in the laminating press.

21. The laminating press as recited in claim 20, wherein the riser defines a plurality of pathways through the riser for communicating air into and from the gaps during the laminating process.

22. The laminating press as recited in claim 21, further comprising a plenum for common communication of the air for at least two of the pathways.

23. The laminating press as recited in claim 21, wherein the pathways are defined in spaced-apart relation in the ridges.

24. The laminating press as recited in claim 20, wherein the riser comprises a body in which the plurality of recesses are formed to define the alternating ridges and recesses.

25. The laminating press as recited in claim 24, wherein the body defines a plurality of pathways for communicating air into and from the gaps during the laminating process.

26. The laminating press as recited in claim 25, further comprising a plenum for common communication of the air for at least two of the pathways.

27. The laminating press as recited in claim 20, wherein each ridge comprises a plurality of elongate members attached to the press table in spaced-apart relation to an adjacent one of the elongate members, thereby defining the alternating ridges and recesses.

28. The laminating press as recited in claim 27, wherein each elongate member defines a plurality of spaced-apart pathways for communicating air into and from the gaps during the laminating process.

29. The laminating press as recited in claim 28, wherein each ridge comprises a plurality of elongate members attached to the press table in spaced-apart relation to an adjacent one of the elongate members, thereby defining the alternating ridges and recesses.

30. The laminating press as recited in claim 20, wherein the riser is integral with the press table.